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No. 28.—Part II.

A LETTER FROM PETER COOPER. 2

*To His Excellency ABRAHAM LINCOLN,
President of the United States:*

Most Respected Sir,—Since I last had the honor to address you, in January, 1862, the courage, skill and perseverance manifested by you in your efforts to maintain and defend our union of States, with all their rightful authority and power, has commanded my heartfelt gratitude, confidence and respect.

Your efforts to bring back the Rebel States to accept the supremacy of the Constitution and the laws, with the general course of your Administration, have compelled me to believe that there is nothing that you have sought and desired so much, as to know and apply the best means to secure a lasting and honorable peace, and to overcome, with the least possible expense of life and treasure, a rebellion that embodies in itself the sum of all that is vile.

It would have been too much to expect from any human being, that such a complication of difficulties and dangers as those you have encountered, should have been met and overcome without errors and mistakes as to the best means to restore peace to our country.

Our Union of States, which has, from the commencement of the government, continued to spread its protecting shield over all the rights reserved to each of the individual States, can never be abandoned to the despotism of slavery, or the heresy of secession, while there is life and power to maintain and defend it.

In my letter, I endeavored to show that nothing but the cor-

rupting power of buying and selling human beings, could ever so far demoralize a people as to cause them to deluge a nation in blood, in order to perpetuate an institution that enslaves thousands of their own children.

It must be apparent to all who desire the preservation of the Union, that the slaves who now cultivate the fields, and who perform a large portion of the mechanical labor of the South, are as much a power to be met and overcome, as the Rebel armies that are now doing their utmost to spread death and desolation over our country.

I believe with you, that it is impossible for a people who are determined to perpetuate slavery at the expense of all the horrors of a civil war, to continue to hold slaves and live in peace with a Government having its foundation on the equal and inalienable rights of man.

In relation to the propriety of the employment of negroes as a war measure, or means to conquer the rebellion, I fear the greatest mistakes of the war have been made.

It has taken time to educate the people to see and feel the absolute necessity of attacking the rebellion in the only way by which it can be speedily and effectually overcome, and at the same time extinguish a cause of national sorrow, demoralization, and disgrace.

You have, with great propriety, asked the question, "Why should negroes do anything for us, if we will do nothing for them?"

You have said rightly, that "if they stake their lives for us, they must be prompted by the strongest motives."

The correctness and wisdom of that opinion cannot be called in question.

It is greatly to be deplored that the Government, and so many people of the North, with some of the officers of the army, have been so slow to perceive and adopt the only effectual means, which is to use the negroes as a power by which this terrible war of rebellion can be put down.

Those who have sympathized with rebels, know their importance, and they are the persons who have uniformly raised a clamor against their use, and every other measure calculated

to strengthen our own Government, or to strike the rebellion in its weakest place.

It is cause of astonishment to all who realize the fact that this desolating war is now carried on against us by less than one-third of the inhabitants of the United States.

This is rendered still more astonishing, when we remember that more than one-half of this one-third now left within the limits of the Rebel States, are our friends, and have been at all times ready and anxious to aid us so soon as their safety and freedom could be secured.

I believe that the war of Rebellion would have been short, if, at the commencement of the struggle, a decided policy in relation to the employment of negroes could have been adopted and sustained by the people of the North.

It should have been a policy promising freedom, protection, and a soldier's bounty to all able-bodied slaves of Rebels who would enlist to defend the Union, the Constitution, and the laws which made us a nation. It should have been a policy defined by a proclamation to be constantly kept before the people, setting forth the fact that the Government of the United States have been compelled, in the most reluctant self-defence, to adopt these measures, to meet in actual war those States now in open Rebellion against all the rightful authority and power of the Nation, thereby forcing on the Government the painful necessity of using all means known in civilized warfare in order to put down a combination of wicked men who aim to destroy the Union and to build upon its ruins a Government where "property shall own labor," and of which the corner-stone shall be the enslavement of millions of human beings.

Our National Government, after having organized all the public lands into Territorial Governments, with the right to engraft Slavery upon them all whenever the people of any State shall so elect, and after passing, by an almost unanimous vote in Congress, a resolution declaring that the Government had no intention or desire to interfere with Slavery in any manner where it was then legally held, did further demonstrate the sincerity of the Government by proposed amendment to the Constitution in order to put it forever out of the power of Congress to interfere with Slavery within the States.

All these efforts failed to satisfy the people of the South, whose present Vice-President, when in the Convention of Secessionists, defied their body to show a single act of the General Government that was intended to oppress or injure the people of the South, whose leading men had long before determined on a dissolution of the Union, for no better reason than the one stated by John C. Calhoun more than thirty years ago. He then said their system of Slavery was an aristocratic system, and that they were an aristocratic people, and that so long as they could control the action of the General Government they would remain in it, but when they could not, they would break it up.

This they are now trying to do by any and all means in their power.

To prevent them from bringing upon our country, and the world such a calamity, our Government will be fully justified in holding out every inducement to slaves of Rebels to join our army to fight for their freedom and independence.

The policy of employing the negroes in our defence, if I am not mistaken, is demanded by the highest interests of the South as well as by the North.

I believe that ten years will not pass before the people of the South will erect monuments to commemorate their 'deliverance from the blight of Slavery.

They will verify the truth of what Homer declared two thousand six hundred years ago, when he said that

“ Whatever day makes man a slave
Takes half his worth away.”

I, for one, envy not the man who, to save a nation's life, will not say : *Perish Slavery—perish all that stands in the way of maintaining the freedom and independence that our Union was intended to secure.*

Hoping that our Government will always contend for those measures best calculated to establish justice and promote the general welfare, I remain,

With great respect, your friend,

PETER COOPER.